

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1-7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously Presented) A method for maintaining a messaging network having a master platform and at least one messaging platform, the master platform having a master global routing table and each messaging platform having a global routing table, the master global routing table and each global routing table each holding a messaging platform entry for each messaging platform on the messaging network, each messaging platform entry having a host ID, an area of operation, an operational status, and a token pool, the method comprising the steps of:

responding to each messaging platform on the messaging network that sends a response message to the master platform, said response message sent by each messaging platform at a selected interval which is defined in the messaging platform entry corresponding to each messaging platform;

sending a query message to a messaging platform on the messaging network that fails to send a response message to the master platform within said selected interval;

updating a messaging platform entry of said messaging platform in the master global routing table and the global routing table of each messaging platform on the messaging network, if said messaging platform fails to respond to said query message, said step of updating setting an operational status within said messaging platform entry to indicate a disabled status; and

using said operational status of a remote messaging platform to determine whether said messaging platform may send a user message using the messaging network to said remote messaging platform for delivery to an area of operation supported by said remote messaging platform.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, further including the steps of:

providing the token pool of each messaging platform with an initial amount of tokens;

debiting a debit amount from the token pool of a messaging platform that requests delivery of a user message at an area of operation supported by a remote messaging platform; and

incrementing a credit amount to the token pool of said remote messaging platform in response to the delivery of said user message within said area of operation by said remote messaging platform.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, further including a step of updating a messaging platform entry of a messaging platform to have a disabled operation status in response to said messaging platform having a token pool amount that falls below a selected threshold.

11-38. (Canceled)

39. (Previously Presented) A system for maintaining a messaging network having at least one messaging platform, the system comprising:

a master platform having a master global routing table which holds a messaging platform entry for each messaging platform on the messaging network, each messaging platform entry in said master global routing table having a host ID, an area of operation, an operational status, and a token pool;

a global routing table for each messaging platform, wherein said global routing table holds a messaging platform entry for each messaging platform on the messaging network, each messaging platform entry having a host ID, an area of operation, an operational status, and a token pool;

wherein said master platform is configured to respond to each messaging platform on the messaging network that sends a response message to said master platform, said response message sent by each messaging platform at a selected

interval which is defined in the messaging platform entry corresponding to each messaging platform;

wherein said master platform is further configured to send a query message to a messaging platform on the messaging network that fails to send a response message to the master platform within said selected interval;

wherein said master platform is further configured to update said operational status of said messaging platform entry to a disabled status, said messaging platform entry corresponding to said messaging platform in said master global routing table and said global routing table of each messaging platform on the messaging network, if said messaging platform fails to respond to said query message; and

wherein a messaging platform on the network is configured to check said operational status of a remote messaging platform to determine whether said messaging platform may send a user message using the messaging network to remote messaging platform for delivery to an area of operation supported by said remote messaging platform.

40. (Original) The system of claim 39, wherein said master platform provides said token pool of each messaging platform with an initial amount of tokens; said master platform debits a debit amount from a token pool of an originating messaging platform that requests delivery of a user message at an area of operation supported by a remote messaging platform; and said master platform increments a credit amount to a token pool of said remote messaging platform in response to the delivery of said user message within said area of operation by said remote messaging platform.

41. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein said master platform updates a messaging platform profile of a messaging platform to have a disabled operation status in response to said messaging platform having a token pool amount that falls below a selected threshold.

42-61. (Canceled)

62. (Previously Presented) A system for maintaining a messaging network having a plurality of messaging devices, comprising:

a master device having a master global routing data structure with a messaging device data entry for each of the plurality of messaging devices on the messaging network, each messaging device data entry including a host ID and an operational status;

wherein the master device is configured to respond to each messaging device on the messaging network that sends a first message type within a predetermined interval;

wherein the master device is configured to send a second message type to a messaging device on the messaging network that fails to send the first message type to the master device within the predetermined interval; and

wherein the master device is further configured to alter the operational status of the messaging device entry to a disabled status if the messaging device fails to respond to the second message type.

63. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 62 wherein the predetermined interval is defined in the messaging device data entry corresponding to each of the plurality of messaging devices.

64. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 62 wherein a first messaging device on the network is configured to check the operational status of a second messaging device to determine whether the first messaging device may send a user message using the messaging network to the second messaging device.

65. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 62, further comprising an operational area data entry for each of the plurality of messaging devices in the master global routing data structure.

66. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 65 wherein a first messaging device on the network is configured to check the operational area of a second messaging device to determine whether the first messaging device may send a user message using the messaging network to the second messaging device for delivery to an area of operation supported by the second messaging device.

67. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 62, further comprising a global routing data structure associated with each of the plurality of messaging devices, the global routing data structure having a messaging device data entry for each of the plurality of messaging devices on the messaging network, each messaging device data entry comprising a host ID, and an operational status.

68. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 67 wherein the master device is further configured to update the operational status of messaging device data entries of the global routing data structure associated with each of the plurality of messaging devices.

69. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 68 wherein the master device alters the operational status of a messaging device data entry for a predetermined one of the plurality of messaging devices in the global routing data structure associated with each of the plurality of messaging devices to a disabled status if the predetermined messaging device fails to respond to the second message type.

70. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 62 wherein each of the plurality of messaging devices has an initial amount of tokens in a token pool associated with the respective messaging device, the master device being further configured to debit a debit amount of tokens from the token pool of a first messaging device that requests delivery of a user message at an area of operation supported by a second messaging device and to add a credit amount of tokens to the token pool of the second

messaging device in response to the delivery of the user message within the area of operation by the second messaging device.

71. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 70 wherein the master device updates a messaging device profile of a predetermined one of the plurality of messaging devices to have a disabled operation status in response to the predetermined messaging device having a token pool amount that falls below a predetermined threshold.